

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES  
MEETING OF JANUARY 25, 2006

A regular meeting of the Lexington Planning Board held in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Office Building, was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Manz with members Galaitsis, Hornig, Canale, Harden and planning staff McCall-Taylor, Schilt and Tap present.

\*\*\*\*\* ARTICLES FOR 2006 TOWN MEETING \*\*\*\*\*

Article 7, CD-7 to CD-13, 727 Marrett Road, Starwood Hotels and Resorts, Public Information Meeting: Present for the public information meeting on the property owner's rezoning proposal for the Sheraton Hotel site were Mr. John Farrington, attorney; Mr. Robert Weidknecht, engineer, Beals and Thomas; Mr. Scott Thrun, senior project manager, Starwood; Mr. Alex Campbell, architect, Fruchtman Associates; Mr. John Fotiadis, architect, Costas Kondylis and Partners; and Mr. William Bunce, General Manager of the Sheraton.

Mr. Thrun outlined Starwood's program for the property and Mr. Bunce described the realities of the hotel industry and the current building's failure to perform in an evolving market. The hotel and its systems are outdated; the multiple entries are a security issue and there are Americans with Disabilities Act compliance issues. Mr. Weidknecht presented an aerial overview of the site, an analysis of its viewsheds, and described in general the site work that would be needed for the two hotel buildings, pointing out that the plan calls for less disturbance of the knoll than the renovation/addition plans approved in 1989.

Mr. Farrington said that the Transportation Demand Management measures proposed by Flatley as part of the 1989 rezoning have been instituted, with the \$150,000 payment the only significant outstanding item. Mr. Canale said that there was also an obligation to set up a transportation management program as well as an annual reporting requirement.

Mr. Campbell showed plans for the aloft hotel reflecting changes made in response to the Board's previous comments. The sign on top and its up-lighting were removed, and surface treatments changed. Mr. Fotiadis presented the Extended Stay by Westin hotel plans, which show different exterior cladding from the previous iteration. Both buildings have four stories.

**Board Comments and Questions:**

Mr. Harden said that the two hotel buildings should relate to each other, even though each has its own brand identity, perhaps in a more campus-like setting. The presentation should show both buildings on the site sections and elevations rather than presenting each building individually. He also suggested providing a cross-section through the aloft building to show how it relates to the knoll. He found it hard to see how these designs fit the site.

Mr. Galaitsis concurred about the need to see sections showing the current and proposed grades and elevations. He did not feel that the buildings fit into a colonial environment. He asked that the presentation be accurate and realistic. He pointed out inconsistencies, such as Starwood's statement that the development was not visible from Fiske Hill and Route 128, as compared to another statement that the in-ground pool was a beacon.

Mr. Hornig discussed the setbacks and the FAR. He felt that the current proposal should be compared to the standards of the CRO district as well as those of the CD-7. He said the developer would have to justify the fourth floor. Mr. Farrington replied that the fourth floor gives a smaller footprint and that two buildings can be better set on the site than could one large hotel. The fourth floor allows more rooms, which makes the economics work. Mr. Thrun added that public space is a fixed cost which is amortized over the number of rooms. Mr. Campbell said that there would be substantially more tax revenues with this proposal than if the 1989 plan were built.

Mr. Canale said he was concerned about the view from Rout 2A as it is the gateway to the National Park. He does not want to see a false colonial style and appreciates the attempts to relate to the historical context. He is looking for buildings that are restrained in design, that do not draw attention to themselves, in terms of size, scale and design materials. He felt that basic information was lacking such as the rationale for this development and the mitigation offers. He was not sure that there was enough time to resolve these issues.

Ms. Manz said her concerns echoed those of her colleagues. Although she was is not looking for faux colonial, so much of the design is locked in and is hard-edged and modern. She asked what kind of coordination was being done with the National Park.

### **Audience Questions and Comments**

National Park Superintendent Nancy Nelson said that she met once, last week, with the developer. She indicated that a "quieter" site design would provide a better gateway to the historical corridor through the park. The current hotel has glaring floodlights. A connection between the Sheraton property and the Park's trail system is needed.

Mr. Frank Sandy, TMM Pr. 6, questioned the proposed presence of a bar not connected with a restaurant.

In conclusion, the Board advised the development team to tighten up their presentation and to provide electronic files of the plans for the Town's website. Mr. Canale added that the hotel derives a great deal of visibility from its proximity to the National Park. He asked them to be good neighbors to the park.

\*\*\*\*\* MINUTES \*\*\*\*\*

Review of Minutes: The Board reviewed and corrected the minutes for the meeting of December 7, 2005. On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to approve the minutes as amended.

\*\*\*\*\* ADMINISTRATION OF LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS \*\*\*\*\*

### **PLANS NOT REQUIRING APPROVAL UNDER THE SUBDIVISION CONTROL LAW**

Form A/2006-1, 4 Clematis Road and 36 Allen Street: The Board reviewed an Approval Not Required Plan for land at 4 Clematis Road and 36 Allen Street. On a motion duly made and seconded it was voted to endorse the plan entitled "Plan of Land in Lexington in Mass., dated January 16, 2006", prepared and certified by James Keenan, Registered Land Surveyor, Winchester, MA, with Form A/2006-1, submitted by Thomas Costello, applicant, as it does not require approval under the Subdivision Control Law.

### **SUBDIVISION OF LAND**

177 Grove Street, Rayvon Realty Trust, Request to Withdraw Sketch Plan: Mr. Schilt reported that Mr. Douglas Lees, Land Engineering, has asked to withdraw the sketch plan for property at 177 Grove Street. There are on-going discussions with the neighbors, and the applicant would like time to work with abutting property owners in hopes of resolving a number of outstanding issues. The applicant now plans to submit a preliminary cluster subdivision plan for the property rather than request continued review of the sketch plan. On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to allow the applicant to withdraw the sketch cluster subdivision plan for 177 Grove Street without prejudice.

16 Shade Street Preliminary Subdivision Plan, Seaver Construction, Request for Extension: Mr. Schilt reported that developer Mr. Scott Seaver has requested an extension of the time in which the Board has to act on the preliminary reduced frontage subdivision plan, as the application was incomplete. On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to grant an extension of time for the applicant to prepare a revised plan and submit it for review no later than February 15, 2006.

\*\*\*\*\* ARTICLES FOR 2006 TOWN MEETING \*\*\*\*\*

Zoning By-Law, Proposed Inclusionary Housing Amendment: The Board discussed a number of aspects of its proposed inclusionary housing amendment including: offering developers a density bonus in return for providing various forms of affordable housing in subdivisions; the financial impact of the proposed amendment on owners of smaller parcels of developable land as compared to impacts on owners of larger parcels; and whether the provisions should apply to all subdivisions requiring a special permit, beginning at those with three units.

It was agreed that changes that should be incorporated in the next draft included the removal of the rounding in the inclusionary credits table and the addition of the town's right of first refusal when affordable units are sold. The option of changing the bedroom mix in smaller developments to allow two bedroom units should be explored further. Due to the late hour, it was agreed to continue the discussion at a future meeting.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:40 p.m.

Anthony G. Galaisis, Clerk